DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 347 423 CG 024 351

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TITLE School Counselor Preparation towards Working with Students with Disabilities.
PUB DATE Jul 92
NOTE 61p.; M.Ed. Seminar Paper, Ohio University.
PUB TYPE Dissertations/Theses - Undetermined (040)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Counselor Role; *Counselor Training; *Disabilities; Elementary Secondary Education; *School Counseling; *School Counselors; *Special Needs Students

ABSTRACT

School counseling has evolved from primarily being a vocational guidance service for high school students to being a multifaceted service. School counselors have been providing services to an increasing number of special education students especially since the passage of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975. School counselors need to be knowledgeable about this law; federal and state diagnostic and placement criteria; individualized educational programs; and mainstreaming concepts. When counseling special needs students in the area of postsecondary educational opportunities, school counselors' responsibilities may extend to include teaching disabled students to become self advocates, completing financial aid forms, and providing information on institutions of higher learning with adequate support services. The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education and the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Education Programs established criteria for counselor education programs to use as guidelines to ensure school counselors-in-training attain a high level of academic competence and a mastery of counseling skills. Researchers and theorists have made these recommendations for the enhancement of counselor education programs: incorporating learning experiences and activities regarding exceptional students into existing coursework, requiring a course which gives an overview of handicapping conditions, inviting guest lecturers, and/or a seminar course for students from the related disciplines of school counseling, rehabilitation counseling, special education, and vocational counseling. (ABL)

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ED347423

School Counselor Preparation Towards Working With Students With Disabilities

A Seminar Paper Presented to the
Faculty of the College of Education
Ohio University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Education

Benita L. West

July, 1992

CG024351

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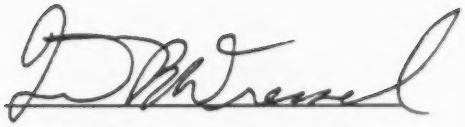

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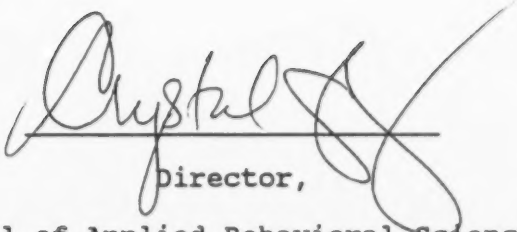

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Table of Contents

Chapter One -Introduction..... 1

Statement of the Problem..... 2

Research Questions..... 2

Purpose/Significance of the Study..... 3

Assumptions..... 3

Delimitations..... 4

Limitations..... 4

Definition of Terms..... 5

Procedures..... 6

Organization of the Study..... 6

Chapter Two - Literature Review..... 8

Academic Preparation..... 8

Roles and Responsibilities.....15

Professional Standards and Certification Requirements.....23

Accreditation Standards.....24

Professional Organization Standards.....25

Certification Requirements.....26

Standards, Requirements, and Counselor Education Programs.....27

Recommendations Presented in the Literature.....27

Summary.....29

Chapter Three - Analysis of the Literature.....30

Academic Preparation.....30

Roles and Responsibilities.....34

Professional Standards and Certification Requirements.....37
Accreditation Standards.....38
Professional Organization Standards.....38
Certification Requirements.....39
Standards, Requirements, and Counselor Education Programs.....39
Recommendations Presented in the Literature.....40
Summary.....41
Chapter Four - Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations.43
Summary of the Study.....43
Conclusions.....47
Recommendations.....48
References.....50
Additional References.....56

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

The role of school counselors has changed over the years. In the early 1900's, school counselors provided vocational guidance in high schools. Today's school counselors counsel preschool to high school students in areas of growth and development, coping with the divorce of one's parents or homelessness, gang involvement, etc. School counselors act as consultants to parents, teachers, and administrators. They perform some of the duties of an administrative assistant and they are liaisons between schools and community mental health agencies.

Until the early 1970's, school counselors basically provided these services for students in regular education programs only. Several events occurred which altered this situation. Parent groups became more vocal in seeking support for educational and vocational training for their children with disabilities. The normalization principle which emphasized cultural and educational programs for exceptional children patterned after programs for "normal" children was introduced in the United States in 1969. The Bill of Rights for mentally retarded persons was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1971 (Rotatori, Banbury, & Sisterhern, 1986).

However, the most important events were probably the legislative acts passed by the federal government which mandated counseling services for exceptional students. The

1970 Education of the Handicapped Act was a state grant program to help educate disabled students and provide related support services, including psychological services. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (P. L. 93-112) stated a person could not be excluded from participating in, be denied benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal funds based solely on his/her handicap. P. L. 94-142 (the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975) mandated counseling services for students with disabilities and their parents. The 1990 Education of the Handicapped Amendment (P. L. 101-476) changed the name of the 1970 act to Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), extended related services to rehabilitation counseling and social work, and added transition services, a coordinated set of activities that promote movement to postsecondary education, vocational training, etc. It also required states to ensure that all personnel be trained continuously and appraised of the latest research, practices, and technology (Rotatori et al., 1986; Staff, 1991).

Statement of the Problem

The problem of this study is to identify the necessity for and types of school counselor professional preparation programs for working with students with disabilities.

Research Questions

The following research questions are to be addressed in this paper.

1. What are the roles and responsibilities of school counselors in relation to special needs students?

2. What are the requirements of professional organizations and state legislatures for certification and/or licensure for school counselors to work with disabled students?

3. How do legal and professional standards effect school counselor preparation towards serving the disabled population?

4. What recommendations have researchers made for school counselor training in working with the disabled student?

Purpose/Significance of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore issues applicable to counselor training programs' preparation of school counselors to assist disabled students. This is done in the hope that counselor educators and school counseling majors will use this information to increase their awareness of the special needs of the disabled and increase their effectiveness when working with this population.

Assumptions

The following assumptions were made regarding the research for this paper.

1. It was assumed that school counselors have roles and responsibilities towards disabled students that are different from those towards "regular" education students.

2. It was assumed that certification requirements and accreditation standards effect the course of study provided by counselor education programs.

3. It was assumed that most counselor preparation programs for school counselors do not include preparation for working with disabled students.

Delimitations

In this research, only literature which focuses on exceptional needs students as identified by the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 is reviewed. It does not include students who are identified as gifted and talented.

Limitations

Research regarding school counselors preparation and roles and responsibilities toward students with disabilities was completed more frequently during the first five years after P. L. 94-142 went into effect than during the last five years. Research studies since 1987 have been scarce. Therefore, the review of current literature includes studies that are up to 15 years old and may not be as factual today as they were when they were originally published.

The conclusions and recommendations for future changes of counselor education programs are based on a thorough

review of current literature; however, journal articles and reference books utilized were those available in the Alden Library at Ohio University. Resource materials not among Alden Library's current holdings or subscriptions or were unavailable at the time the author was completing the research were excluded from the review, analysis, and integration into the content of this paper.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined for the clarity of this paper.

School Counselor

> School counselors are specifically credentialed professionals who work in school settings with students, parents, educators, and others within the community. They design and manage comprehensive developmental guidance programs to help students acquire skills in the social, personal, education, and career areas necessary for living in a multicultural society. (ASCA Governing Board, 1988, as cited in Rotter, 1990, p. 183)

Disabled/Exceptional/Handicapped Student

> The term "handicapped children" means mentally retarded, hard of hearing, deaf, speech or language impaired, or other health impaired children, or children with specific learning disabilities, who by reason thereof require special education and related

services. (United States Government, 1975, as cited in Data Research, 1987, p. 249)

Individualized Education Program (IEP)

An IEP is a document required by P. L. 94-142 for all students placed in a special education program. It includes long range goals that specify academic or behavioral goals that are to be achieved during the school year and short term objectives which are detailed, measurable steps leading to the mastery of annual goals. All support services to be provided are also included.

Procedures

The ERIC database on the CD-SearchNet computer systems was used for this research. Entries were reviewed from 1977 to the present. Descriptors utilized in the search were "school/guidance counselors and handicapped/disabled students," "school counselor training and handicapped/disabled students," "school counselor roles and handicapped/disabled students," "school counselor certification," and "counselor accreditation." The same descriptors were used on the Info-Trac computer system. A computer search of Alden Library's current holdings under the subject of "school counselors" and "handicapped children" using the ALICE system was also completed.

Organization of the Study

The following paper has been divided into four major chapters. Chapter one identifies the problem. It includes

background information, the specific issue under investigation, research questions related to the issue, information regarding the expectations and possible benefits of the research conducted, a list of underlying assumptions, the parameters in which the research was executed, limitations that effect the reliability and validity of the research, definitions of relevant terms, the method by which the research was conducted, and an overview of the entire paper.

A review of literature is reported in Chapter Two. The reader is presented with a summarization of research findings pertaining to the aforementioned research problem and specific questions.

In Chapter Three a discussion and analysis of the research findings featured in Chapter Two and the research methodology is reported. The author suggests possible interpretations of the findings.

Chapter Four is a review, summary, and synthesis of the information provided in the previous chapters. In addition, recommendations for present and future actions and for further investigation of the topic are discussed.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

There are many children in schools who are labeled exceptional. It is difficult for these children to accept that they are "simply human." These children need to feel accepted. They need to learn how to use their exceptional characteristics in special ways. Children who are not labeled need to learn to understand those who are exceptional and to learn ways of benefitting from them. Parents and teachers also need to find ways of understanding, assisting, and benefitting from exceptional children (Gerber, 1991).

School counselors have been providing services to an increasing number of students with disabilities since P. L. 94-142 went into effect. Their roles and responsibilities have expanded too. The increase in service and the expansion of school counselors' roles has implications for counselor education programs and for professional standards and certification requirements.

Academic Preparation

Tucker, Shepard, and Hurst (1986) discussed the need for school counselors to be at least minimally prepared to work with exceptional students. Counselors need to be knowledgeable about the intent of P. L. 94-142, the law's implications for schools and school counseling services, diagnostic criteria, placement criteria, individualized

educational programs (IEPs), and related services. School counselors need the opportunity to confront their prejudices, negative attitudes, and/or uncomfortable feelings about students with disabilities during the training process to prevent these feelings from interfering with the counseling of exceptional students and their parents. Additionally, school counselors need to be knowledgeable on how particular handicapping conditions effect physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development as well as career decisions.

Hosie, Patterson, and Hollingsworth (1989) discussed seven interrelated areas that suggest the need for inclusion or increased emphasis in the curricula of school education programs. The areas are range of services, types of disabilities, ethnic, cultural, or language issues, family involvement, technology, ethics and ethical decision-making skills, and interdisciplinary collaboration. Furthermore, it was suggested that school counselors needed the same competencies as Tucker et al. (1986) mentioned plus knowledge of the psychological and sociological impact of the disability on the individual and their family members, ethnic, cultural, and language factors related to people with disabilities, current federal and state legislation, program guidelines, and policies, and the roles and skills of other personnel within and outside the school in order to provide comprehensive services to students with

disabilities.

In a special article, McIntosh, Minifie, Rotter, Salmond, and Turner (1979) each gave their individual viewpoint on the type of training counselors should receive in the area of special education. McIntosh stated counselors needed coursework with a broad view of the differing handicaps and supervised experience in working with handicapped conditions. Rotter suggested infusing mainstreaming concepts into all aspects of the training program. Minifie discussed the need for knowledge of the laws, IEPs, different handicapping conditions, and types of evaluation instruments. Salmond suggested knowledge of the laws, handicapping conditions, and assessment procedures were not enough. Consulting skills should be emphasized also. Turner opined that counselors-in-training needed additional information on their role in implementing the laws, remediation techniques, and evaluation instruments.

Several research studies support the theories presented in the aforementioned articles. Novak, Wicas, and Elias (1977), in an editorial, reported on a research study which indicated that there were special education classes in 82% of the schools where the counselors were employed; however, only 43% of the counselors had taken any special education courses. Sixty percent indicated they were ill-prepared for work with special education children in their professional training and that more extensive training was needed to

stimulate their willingness to serve special education pupils.

Foster (1977) surveyed over 770 high school guidance departments nationally in regards to their functions with exceptional students, their anticipated functions in the future, the extent they used outside resources, and the information they needed to provide adequate service. It was revealed in the results that 73.7% provided services to students with disabilities but only 20% of the counselors had any training or in-service for working with children with disabilities. The majority of the counselors expressed a need for training in specialized interventions for disabled students.

Lombana (1980) sent questionnaires to 275 elementary schools to adult basic education counselors with membership in the Florida School Counselor Association regarding the amount of time spent with special needs students, coursework in special education, and current needs for counseling exceptional students. Out of the 195 responses, all spent some time carrying out functions relating to P. L. 94-142; however, over one-half (57%) had not taken any coursework in the area of special education. The counselors indicated a need for additional knowledge of appropriate personal and interpersonal developmental guidance materials and activities, appropriate vocational guidance materials and activities, educational and vocational characteristics and

needs, curriculum materials and teaching strategies, diagnostic instruments, and postsecondary educational opportunities and provisions. Additional training in group counseling techniques, using guidance materials developed for handicapped students, and skill in improving the attitudes and behaviors of nonhandicapped students toward handicapped students was also emphasized. It was concluded that although the guidance services provided had the same elements, significant differences existed and there was a need for modification of counseling strategies.

Stibbe, Aldinger, and Baumann (1983) recorded the results of over 950 questionnaires sent to school counselors in Ohio. The survey questioned the amount of time spent on P. L. 94-142 duties and what training would enhance the ability of beginning counselors. Approximately 82% of the counselors spent 20% or less of their time implementing these duties. However, the results indicated that while 86% of high school and 87% of junior high school counselors spent at most 20% of their time with these duties, 54% of elementary school counselors spent greater than 20% of their time on implementation. The three most important skills that would enhance a beginning counselor's ability to implement P. L. 94-142 are: 1) an overview of special education, 2) information regarding P. L. 94-142, and 3) knowledge of disabling conditions.

In a study similar to Lombana's, Lusk, Williams, and Hartshorne (1985) surveyed 100 high school counselors on the amount of contact the counselors had with special education students, the relationship between their self-perceived effectiveness and their special education background, and their willingness to seek additional training if it was readily available. Sixty-six percent spent less than 10% of their time with special education students and only one respondent spent more than half his/her time working with this population. Two-thirds of those responding felt the services they provided were adequate. Over one-half (54%) of the respondents expressed a willingness to take additional courses and felt their services would be more effective with more extensive training.

Over 100 elementary school counselors were surveyed by Helms and Katsiyannis (1992) concerning their professional training and the services they provided to special education students and their satisfaction with these services. While some respondents had an undergraduate degree in special education, 27.6% had one unit in special education, and 38.9% had taken a workshop or special class. While 65% felt their guidance program was effective, 93% felt comfortable serving special education students, 95% were somewhat to very familiar with P. L. 94-142 and its implications for school counselors, and 91% were familiar with the characteristics unique to exceptional students, 76.1% still

indicated a need for more training. The majority of counselors who felt comfortable with exceptional students were familiar with P. L. 94-142 and the characteristics of exceptional children. It was concluded that training counselors in understanding students with disabilities and providing appropriate services should be a priority.

Baker (1976) expressed the need for regular counselors with knowledge about the special needs of the disabled and the ability to effectively apply their counseling techniques to help them. Informed counselors will understand the differences that exceptional children have and will be able to provide the students, parents, and teachers with accurate information (cited in Tucker et al., 1986).

The Office for Civil Rights, ED (1991) stressed the importance of in-service training and/or continuing education to assist in expanding and improving counseling service delivery to special populations. Training is seen as valuable in aiding counselors in identifying and correcting discriminatory guidance and counseling services while providing appropriate techniques to meet the needs of special groups.

Margolis and Rungta (1986) offered criticisms of specialized training. Courses that focus on specific populations accentuate the differences to the point that counselors may attend to one characteristic instead of focusing on that person's total experience. Separate course

may limit the ability of counselors to transfer their learning from one population to another. Additional coursework may not be feasible due to budge restraints, the total number of course a student can realistically be expected to take, and the availability of expert faculty.

Roles and Responsibilities

"The school counselor might reasonably be expected to perform certain functions in the implementation of P. L. 94-142 while certain other functions exist that are not primarily those of the school counselor" (American School Counselor Association (ASCA), 1990, p. 5). The ASCA (1990) explained that some components of P. L. 94-142 such as due process, IEPs, and the least restrictive environment offer opportunities for utilization of a counselor's skill but it is important that the counselor's role in these procedures be clearly defined and understood by all concerned.

High school counselors indicated in a survey that they provided the same services to students with handicapping conditions as nonhandicapped students. These services included academic counseling, postsecondary information, career guidance, personal/social counseling, testing, and vocational evaluations. Furthermore, matching occupational requirements to a student's capabilities, limits, and interests, family counseling, and in some cases, job placement are part of the services provided. Consulting with teachers regarding counseling strategies for use in the

classroom is another responsibility (Foster, 1977).

McIntosh et al. (1979) discussed individually the role school counselors assume in relation to P. L. 94-142. McIntosh stated the major role of the school counselor as being preventive, helping nonhandicapped and handicapped students to relate to each other and assisting teachers in learning more about and relating more effectively with handicapped pupils. Acting as consultants and serving as teacher trainers are important roles also. Rotter described their functions as being related to the normal functions of counseling, consulting, and coordinating, with the role of consultant being the most important. School counselors should also conduct workshops for teachers and parents which focus on a sharing of concerns, problems, and anxieties. Minifie suggested school counselors could screen referrals, supervise testing, observe pupils, consult with teachers, be a representative at IEP meetings, and function as a liaison between the school, the parents, and community agencies. Salmond expressed the importance of being a teacher trainer of counseling and consulting activities which could be used in a classroom on a daily basis, facilitating communication between everyone involved in an IEP meeting, and counseling students. Turner stated that the counseling, consulting, and coordinating skills used with the normal school population was effective. Again, consulting and serving as a teacher trainer was emphasized.

Parker and Stodden (1981) suggested counselors use their skills to counsel students, handicapped and nonhandicapped, parents, and teachers regarding their fears and apprehensions. School counselors can provide teachers with assistance in mainstreaming as well as providing nonhandicapped students with appropriate ways to approach handicapped students.

Stibbe et al. (1983) reported that the counselor's responsibilities that were the same for nondisabled and disabled students were assisting students and parents in academic and vocational areas, consulting with teachers regarding social adjustment problems in the classroom, and communicating with parents, faculty, and administrators on guidance activities. Their roles in implementing P. L. 94-142 include providing parents with information on mainstreaming, placement, and academic progress, assisting teachers in modifying curricula and in multifactored assessments, and coordinating contacts between special education and regular education teachers. Counselors can use their specialized training to encourage collaboration among professionals and parents in the development of an IEP, promote group effectiveness and decision-making, and to become advocates for handicapped students.

Bruyere (1986) reported that school counselors should use their knowledge and skills in the identification of behavioral and academic problems for assessments and

referral. As a consultant, counselors are in a unique position to initiate and maintain contact with parents and teachers. They can coordinate findings and activities. As an advocate, they can encourage administrators to grant release time for in-service workshops. Counseling parents, scheduling regular conferences and interpreting diagnostic tests are also important functions.

The Office for Civil Rights, ED (1991) listed activities which can be incorporated, in appropriate circumstances, in school guidance and counseling programs. Some of the activities are (a) informing students and parents on their rights; (b) identifying discriminatory practices in the program's policies and procedures; (c) ensuring effective communication for all students; (d) assisting students in activities such as resume writing, completing financial aid applications, and on-the-job adjustment; (e) reviewing guidance materials for stereotyping; and (f) coordinate counseling activities with other school and community resources and agencies serving special population groups.

There are studies that focus on a single aspect of a school counselor's role and/or responsibility in working with disabled students. The Indiana State Department of Education (1987) provided school counselors with a guide to explain their roles in the assessment process, the case conference meeting, and in the implementation of an IEP for

emotionally handicapped (EH) students. Once a counselor has received a referral, he/she may try a variety of interventions such as classroom plans, home/school intervention plans, and referrals to outside resources. If these interventions fail, school counselors coordinate and schedule a case conference meeting, provide pertinent data from the student's cumulative record, and provide documentation regarding the previously tried interventions. During the case conference, the school counselor presents the necessary information from the cumulative folder and gives input relative to the effectiveness of past interventions. During the implementation of the IEP, a school counselor is responsible for integrating his/her services into the overall program for the student.

Brolin and Gysbers (1989) reflected on the developments which occurred during the 1980s regarding students with disabilities and career education and the challenges it presented to school counselors. Several studies revealed the need for transitional services, federal and state legislation were passed to promote and enhance career development, professional educational groups continued to be advocates for career education, and several career education programs were developed. Counselors need to be aware of any gaps in their school's career education program and decide what modifications may be necessary to serve students with disabilities. In order to carry out guidance activities,

counselors need to accomplish the following:

1. conduct or arrange for career assessment for students with disabilities
2. develop and use community resources, particularly for referral purposes
3. become an advocate for students with disabilities
4. contribute to the development and monitoring of an individual learning programs in cooperation with other educators and parents
5. consult with parents concerning the career development of their children
6. consult with other educators concerning the development of self-awareness and decision-making competencies in students with disabilities
7. work with students with disabilities in the selection or training opportunities and the selection of job possibilities
8. counsel students with disabilities. (p. 158)

In a similar study, Elksnin and Elksnin (1991) related the details of one role a school counselor has regarding career education, job search facilitator. In a comparison of the traditional job search procedures, submitting an application and/or resume for an advertised position, and an alternative approach called the Job Club, learning about jobs through an informal job information network, participants in the Job Club had an employment rate of 90%

versus a 28% to 60% of people seeking jobs using the tradition method. The Job Club was developed for "normal" adults but has been effectively adapted for a diverse population and it has been advocated for use with school age disabled students. As a job search facilitator using the Job Club method, school counselors will (a) view every individual as employable, (b) assist group members in securing a job, and (c) give support to the job seekers and stress the positive characteristic of each participant.

The largest population of students served in special education are those with learning disabilities (LD) and while it is not feasible for all LD students to participate in college training, there are some ways school counselors can assist and prepare them for entering college. Some recommendations include (a) being aware of college training as an appropriate postsecondary option, (b) learn more about LD and how the limitations of LD can be circumvented with accommodation, (c) assist LD student in develop study skills needed for success in college, (d) encourage LD students to become self advocates, (e) consult with vocational rehabilitation agencies regarding evaluation of needs and as a potential source for financial assistance for the student, (f) prepare documented proof of the learning disability prior to graduation, (g) assist in the arrangement for special testing conditions on college entry exams, and (h) serve as a liaison between the college, the parents, and the

student (Satcher & Dooley-Dickey, 1991).

Although the majority of the research reports and/or studies focus on serving students with disabilities directly, there are reports and studies on serving the families of students with disabilities. Humes (1990) reported on the development of support programs for parents. One school-based program, Parent Assisters, was highlighted. Parent Assisters is a group of trained volunteers who help parents on a one-to-one basis in understanding the IEP process and in exercising appropriate responsibilities and rights towards their children. According to Humes, school counselors can be a key to the initiation and development of a parent facilitation program. Cited skills and assets of school counselors in working with parents included being the most neutral and least threatening personnel in pupil services, being able to approach parents nonjudgementally since they have no ties to the special education community, being trained in group dynamics and/or counseling in useful in implementing a parent's program, and providing the general needs assessment necessary for starting a program.

According to Salde (1988), researchers have stressed the importance of parental acceptance of a disabled children and parental involvement in their child's educational program; however, few have addressed the importance and needs of a disabled child's siblings. Normal siblings want their parents to be open and honest with them about the

disabled sibling and the types of family problems that may emerge. Sisters may experience school adjustment problems such as a lack of concentration and/or becoming more aggressive due to increased demands being placed on them at home. Slade reported that four areas have emerged as being significant in predicting how successful a sibling of a disabled child will adjust. These areas are (a) parental attitude toward the disabled child, (b) the gender and the familial position of the nondisabled sibling, (c) the types of problems experienced by the disabled sibling, and (d) the child-rearing practices used by the parents with the nondisabled sibling. School counselors need to be aware of the potential for adjustment problems among the siblings of disabled children. This awareness will enable school counselors to focus on this population for special attention.

Professional Standards and Certification Requirements

The counseling profession has advanced towards the development of uniform national standards in recent years. Evidence that the profession is nearing accord about the definition of counseling is found in licensing efforts, national certification processes, and the accreditation of counselor education programs (Barrett & Schmidt, 1986). Credentials that specify the requirements the accreditation of counselor education programs and counselor certification have been developed.

Accreditation Standards

The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) (1987) established criteria that ensures students attain a high level of academic competence and understanding in their specialty area. Criteria for compliance is as follows: (1) sequential courses and experiences that include academic, methodological, and clinical knowledge necessary for professional competence; (2) utilization of professional organizations' guidelines and standards in the development of an appropriate sequence of courses; (3) preparation for the mastery of the structure, skills, concepts, ideas, values, facts, and research methods of the profession; and (4) collaboration between the education faculty and the specialty studies faculty in program planning and evaluation.

The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Education Programs (CACREP) (1988) identified eight common core areas in which all students are to demonstrate their mastery of knowledge and skills. These areas are (a) human growth and development, (b) social and cultural foundations, (c) help relationships, (d) groups, (e) life-style and development, (f) appraisal, (g) research and evaluation, and (h) professional orientation.

Additionally, each counseling program must adhere to two sets of standards: Environmental Studies and Specialized Studies. The Environmental Studies component

for school counselor preparation programs consists of a minimal eight areas of study of the school setting in which the counselor plans to practice. These areas are (a) history, (b) philosophy, (c) trends, (d) purpose and objectives, (e) ethics, (f) legal aspects, (g) standards, and (h) roles within the school (CACREP, 1988)

The Specialized Studies component is comprised of six areas of functioning by school counselors. The areas are (a) organization and administration; (b) counseling, coordination, and consultation; (c) appraisal; (d) placement, follow-up, and referral; (e) program planning; management, and evaluation; and (f) professional ethics, growth, and development. Each area has specific competencies listed (CACREP, 1988).

Professional Organization Standards

Tryneski (1991) listed the recommendations of regional and national associations regarding certification. The Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Secondary Schools and the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Inc. suggested that requirements for certification be established by the various state departments of education. The North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (Commission on Schools) recommended guidance counselors be certified as teachers and take 18 semester hours of graduate courses in guidance and counseling. The Southern Association of Colleges and

exceptionality for certification. Twenty states require a course in exceptionality for teach certification which is a prerequisite for counselor certification. Rhode Island lists a course in exceptionality as optional.

Standards, Requirements, and Counselor Education Programs

The standards set by professional organizations, the certification requirements of each state department of education, and the coursework offered by counselor education programs are interrelated. Counselor education programs have been influenced by the accreditation standards of regional and national organizations. They are also influenced by the mandates of each state. Criteria set by states for counselor certification often reflects the accreditation standards of CACREP and NCATE. CACREP standards were based on the study of the education and practice of school counselors (Cecil, Deck, & Comas, 1989; Hosie et al., 1989; Parker & Stodden, 1981; Rotter, 1990).

Recommendations in the Literature

Margolis and Rungta (1986) recommended that the total counseling program be infused with attention to unique needs of special populations. One of the goals of each course would be increasing student awareness of issues related to special populations. An additional course that that examined common client issues associated with membership in a special population as well as difficulties of counselors in working with populations different from themselves should

be offered.

Tucker et al. (1986), like Margolis and Rungta, recommended integrating existing counselor training courses with learning experiences and activities regarding exceptional students. Staff members from community mental health agencies, sheltered workshops, etc. could be hired as instructors or used as guest lecturers, speakers, or adjunct part-time faculty. Advocates of the disabled could be invited to classes, seminars, and/or special programs. Required practicum and field experiences can be adapted to include working with students with handicapping conditions.

Hall and Newman (1988) suggested three options. The first option is to include a basic course in exceptionality as a prerequisite or to be taken as an undergraduate. The second option is to include characteristics of exceptional individuals in existing coursework. The third option is a pre-graduate basic course in exceptionality plus a course in counseling exceptional individuals in the advanced training program.

Hosie et al. (1989) encouraged counselor educators to include in their lectures and activities situations involving individuals with handicapping conditions. Furthermore, a multidisciplinary approach can be beneficial. Students from related disciplines (school counseling, rehabilitation counseling, special education, and vocational education) can participate in a joint seminar to increase

the awareness of the services each can provide in various settings.

Summary

School counselors need to be trained to work with nondisabled and disabled students. Theorists and researchers have indicated a need for additional training in the area of exceptionality. Although many of the roles and responsibilities are the same for students in regular education and students in special education, there are additional duties school counselors perform in implementing P. L. 94-142. Professional organizations have established standards for the accreditation of counselor education programs and for the certification of school counselors. These standards influence coursework offered by counselor education programs. These programs are also influenced by the certification requirements mandated by each state's department of education. Integrating existing courses with information on exceptionality, adding a course on exceptionality, and inviting guest lectures are a few suggestions for providing needed knowledge and skills to counselors-in-training.

Chapter Two has provided a review of current literature regarding school counselors and students with disabilities. In Chapter Three, an analysis and discussion of this information is presented.

CHAPTER THREE

Analysis of Literature

As education and society moves towards a new century, school counselors are faced with changing demands. Federal legislation such as the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (P. L. 94-142) has had the dual effect of increasing the number of students who need and receive special services and expanding the range of services school counselors are expected to provide. School counselors are finding themselves increasingly involved with students with disabilities and therefore, they need to be at least minimally prepared in their training to work with students having special needs (Gerler, 1991; Tucker, Shepard, & Hurst, 1986).

Academic Preparation

There are several areas of competence which suggests the appropriateness of working with students with disabilities be included in a school counselor training program. The need to be aware of the intent of P. L. 94-142 and current federal and state legislation, program guidelines, and policies has been documented in the literature (Hosie, Patterson, & Hollingsworth, 1989; McIntosh, Minifie, Rotter, Salmond, & Turner, 1979; Tucker et al., 1986). Counseling and consulting skills alone are not adequate in implementing the legislative mandate. School counselors need to be knowledgeable about diagnostic

criteria, placement criteria, due process, individualized education programs (IEPs), and related services.

School counselors need the opportunity to confront their own attitudes and feelings toward exceptional children (Hosie et al., 1989; Margolis & Rungta, 1986; Tucker et al., 1986). The values of counselors, like people in general, affect their responses to clients. If a school counselor is able to clarify and examine his/her negative attitudes, prejudices, and stereotypical beliefs during counselor training, there is a greater chance that these feelings will not hinder him/her while counseling exceptional students and/or their parents.

There are many different types of handicapping conditions and each influences the physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development of a student (Hosie et al., 1989; McIntosh et al., 1979; Tucker et al., 1986). Knowledge of different learning rates, learning styles, abilities, and impediments to learning of exceptional students will enable school counselors to provide accurate information the students themselves as well as to their parents and their teachers. This information may prevent parents and teachers from having unrealistic expectations of the students.

Exceptional children have a psychological and sociological impact on their families. School counselors will need the skills to counsel family members on adjustment

issues and parental rights and responsibilities. Providing family members with information will alleviate myths and stereotypes while fostering understanding of the child (Hosie et al., 1989; Humes, 1990; Salde, 1988).

There is a need for school counselors to expand their knowledge in vocational and career counseling for students with disabilities. Now that there are technological devices that can make what once seemed to be a nonfeasible vocational goal feasible, school counselors can assist students with disabilities in making a variety of career decisions versus steering them towards nonvocational courses (Brolin & Gysbers, 1989; Humes, Szymanski, & Hohenshil, 1989; Parette & VanBiervliet, 1991; Tucker et al., 1986). In addition, school counselors' awareness of community resources and services available to students with disabilities and their parents is a necessity. Informed counselors can help exceptional students make appropriate career decisions (Brolin & Gysbers, 1989; Hosie et al., 1989; Humes et al., 1989; Tucker et al., 1986).

Other areas of competence needed for counselor training in working with students with disabilities include identifying and correcting discriminatory services as well as providing modified techniques to meet the needs of exceptional students (McIntosh et al., 1979; Office of Civil Rights, ED 1991). An in-depth knowledge of evaluation instruments in order to appropriately interpret the data for

parents and a knowledge of the roles and skill of other school and community agency personnel in order to provide exceptional students with comprehensive service is also a necessity (Hosie et al., 1989; McIntosh et al., 1979).

School counselors in-the-field have supported the need for additional training in working with students with disabilities. Results of studies (Foster, 1977; Helms & Katsiyannis, 1992; Lombana, 1980; Lusk, Williams, & Hartshorne, 1985; Novak, Wicas, and Elias, 1977; Stibbe, Aldinger, & Baumann, 1983) indicated that school counselors were ill-prepared in their professional training to work with exceptional students. Although the majority of counselors spent less than 20% of their time working with special needs students (Foster, 1977; Stibbe et al., 1983), school counselors recommended that the following knowledge and skills would enhance a beginning counselor's ability to work with exceptional students: (a) appropriate intervention techniques (Foster, 1977; Lombana, 1980); (b) appropriate guidance materials and activities (Helms & Katsiyannis, 1992; Lombana, 1980); (c) diagnostic instruments (Lombana, 1980); (d) postsecondary educational opportunities (Lombana, 1980); (e) a special education overview (Helms & Katsiyannis, 1992; Stibbe et al., 1983); (f) information on P. L. 94-142 (Stibbe et al., 1983); and (g) types of disabling conditions (Stibbe et al., 1983).

Literature criticizing specialized training was limited. Margolis and Rungta (1986) observed that focusing on a specific population may cause counselors to attend to one characteristic rather than the total person. Furthermore, the feasibility of additional coursework is effected by budget restrictions, the number of courses students can be realistically expected to take, and the availability of faculty members knowledgeable in-the-field.

Roles and Responsibilities

The school counselor's role in implementing P. L. 94-142 is not clearly defined by the act. "Despite the lack of specificity, there are explicit or implicit role functions for counselors under P. L. 94-142 as amended" (Humes et al., 1989, p. 146).

There are some services that school counselors provide to nondisabled and disabled students. These services include counseling in the areas of academics, personal/social issues, postsecondary educational opportunities, and career/vocational decision-making. Consulting with teachers regarding social adjustment problems and counseling strategies for use in the classroom are additional services that are provided (Foster, 1977; McIntosh et al., 1979; Stibbe et al., 1983).

By including students with disabilities in guidance programs, school counselors add to their list of responsibilities in the roles of counseling, consulting, and

coordinating. One of the major responsibilities of school counselors is prevention. Through small groups sessions and/or classroom guidance activities, school counselors assist children in learning to accept differences (McIntosh, 1979). These differences should include handicapping conditions. Counselors should also work with children on fostering appropriate communication and reactions to various actions. Before handicapped children are mainstreamed, workshops for parents, teachers, and other school personnel, as separate groups or combined, focusing on mutual concerns, problems, and anxities can be held (Foster, 1977; McIntosh et al., 1979; Parker & Stodden, 1991; Stibbe et al., 1983).

The responsibilities school counselors have in the role of consultant when working with exceptional students are the most emphasized. School counselors confer with parents regarding school related counseling activities, the career development of their disabled child, adjustment problems of their nondisabled children as well as their disabled child, and services provided by community agencies (Brolin & Gysbers, 1989; Hosie et al., 1989; Salde, 1988; Stibbe et al., 1983). Additional responsibilities in consulting with teachers are multifactored assessments, specific intervention plans, and modified strategies for developing self-awareness and decision-making competencies (Brolin & Gysbers, 1989; Foster, 1977; Indiana State Department of Education, 1987; McIntosh, 1979; Stibbe et al., 1983).

Furthermore, consulting activities extend to other professionals within and outside of the school system regarding evaluations and additional services (Brolin & Gysbers, 1989; Hosie et al., 1989; Satcher & Dooley-Dickey, 1991).

As coordinators and/or liaisons, school counselors serving special needs students must extend their responsibilities to include this population. In the schools, counselors can utilize their skills to facilitate communication and collaboration during IEP conferences and coordinate contacts between special education teachers and regular education teachers. School counselors can also serve as links between the schools, parents, and community agencies as well as between parents and colleges. They can coordinate activities between the schools and community agencies and/or resources that service special populations (Brolin & Gysbers, 1989; Bruyere, 1986; Indiana State Department of Education, 1987; McIntosh, 1979; Office of Civil Rights, ED, 1991; Satcher & Dooley-Dickey, 1991; Stibbe et al., 1983).

There are additional activities involved in the career education program when working with students with disabilities. Counselors need to review their school's program to insure that there are not any gaps, and if there are, decide what alterations are needed to serve exceptional students (Brolin & Gysbers, 1989). Other responsibilities

include matching occupations to a student's capabilities, assisting in resume writing, and counseling in the area of adjustment to a job situation. Furthermore, school counselors may assist in job placement (Brolin & Gysbers, 1989; Elksnin & Elksnin, 1991; Foster, 1977; Office of Civil Rights, ED, 1991; Satcher & Dooley-Dickey, 1991).

The presence of a child with disabilities has an impact on a family psychologically and sociologically. This impact has several implications for school counselors. P. L. 94-142 required school districts to offer parents counseling services; however, despite the increase in services during the past 10 years, the programs have been poorly implemented (Hosie et al., 1989; Humes, 1990; Humes et al., 1989). School counselors provide information on test results, rights, responsibilities, and technological aids to parents (Hosie et al., 1989; McIntosh et al., 1979; Parette & VanBierliet, 1991). Furthermore, school counselors can assist parents and siblings of children with disabilities in the acceptance of the disability, eliminating misunderstandings regarding the disability, and fostering adequate career development (Foster, 1977; Gerler, 1991; Humes et al, 1989; Salde, 1988).

Professional Standards and Certification Requirements

Requirements for the accreditation of counselor education programs and for counselor certification have been developed in recent years. These credentials were

established by the counseling profession in an effort to move towards uniform national standards. The certification of school counselors was included.

Accreditation Standards

There are two primary governing organizations for the accreditation of school counselor education programs, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Education Programs (CACREP). The NCATE standards are very general. There are not any specific guidelines for coursework. The academic requirements are left up to individual colleges. CACREP stipulations are more specific. There are eight common core areas for all counselors-in-training to demonstrate their mastery of knowledge and skills, eight areas of study of the school setting in which the school counselor-in-training plans to practice, and six areas of functioning by school counselors. While the NCATE and CACREP standards do not prevent the inclusion of coursework relating to disabilities, neither set of standards has any language pertaining to disabilities.

Professional Organizational Standards

The MIddle States Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Secondary Schools and the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Inc. recommended that the state departments of education establish the certification requirements for school counselors. The North

Central Association of Colleges and Schools (Commission on Schools) and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (Commission on Elementary Schools and Commission on Secondary Schools) recommended from 12 to 18 minimum semester hours of coursework in guidance and counseling but there are not specific course requirements (Tryneski, 1991). The standards set by professional organizations for the certification of school counselors are similar to the accreditation standards of NCATE and CACREP in that there is nothing to prevent counselors-in-training from taking any courses relating to students with disabilities but a recommendation for including a course in special education is noticeably omitted.

Certification Requirements

In the past 11 years the number of states requiring special education courses for school counselor certification has rise from two to four. The number of states requiring a special education course for teacher certification which is a prerequisite for school counselors has risen from two, the same two states that required a course for school counselor certification to 20 states (Parker & Stodden, 1981; Tryneski, 1991).

Standards, Requirements, and Counselor Education Programs

Counselor education programs are influenced by the accreditation and certification standards of national and regional organizations as well as the mandates of each

state. The criteria set by the states are often influenced by the accreditation standards of NCATE and CACREP (Cecil, Deck, & Comas, 1989; Hosie et al., 1989; Parker & Stodden, 1981; Rotter, 1990). However, NCATE, and CACREP standards as well as other professional organizations have not kept up with state mandates. Although there is an increasing awareness by state departments of education of the necessity for school counselors-in-training to have addition preparation to work with exceptional students as evidenced by a growing number of states requiring a course in special education, NCATE, CACREP, and other professional organizations have not officially recognized the necessity for supplemental coursework.

Recommendations Presented in the Literature

There have been several recommendations for enhancing counselor education programs in order to prepare school counselors to work with students with disabilities. One suggestion is to infuse the total counseling program with learning experiences and activities regarding exceptional students (Hall & Newman, 1988; Hosie et al, 1989; Margolis & Rungta, 1986; Tucker et al, 1986). Another option is to include a basic course in exceptionality that includes a general overview as well as common client issues associated with membership in a special population (Hall & Newman, 1988; Margolis & Rungta, 1986). Other recommendations are to have staff members from community agencies and advocates

of the disabled be guest speakers, guest lecturers, or instructors and adapt the required practicum and field experience to include working with exceptional students (Tucker et al., 1986). Additionally, Hosie et al. (1989), recommended a seminar course which encompasses the related disciplines of school counseling, rehabilitation counseling, special education, and vocational education.

Summary

An analysis of current literature by theorists and researchers indicates the necessity for school counselors-in-training to be prepared to work with students with disabilities. The roles and responsibilities of school counselors have expanded in order for school districts to be in compliance with federal and state legislation. Professional organizations have developed standards for the accreditation of counselor education programs and certification of school counselors that do not prevent the inclusion of special education courses; however, the need for a course in exceptionality is not indicated. The need for additional preparation is indicated by the increasing number of state departments of education requiring a course in exceptionality for school counselor certification. Recommendations for enhancing counselor education program range from advocates of persons of disabilities being guest speakers to integrating issues of exceptionality into all courses.

Chapter Three has provided an analysis and discussion of current literature that was reviewed in Chapter Two. A review, summarization, and synthesis of information provided in previous chapters as well as recommendations for future actions and further investigations of the topic are presented in Chapter Four.

CHAPTER FOUR

Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Summary of the Study

The job of school counselor has altered since the early 1900's. School counseling has evolved from primarily being a vocational guidance service for high school students to being a multifaceted service providing counseling in the areas of academics, personal/social growth, vocational/career development, etc. for students in preschool through high school. Until the 1960's, school counselors mainly provided these services to "normal" children; however, the passage of federal and state legislation mandating the inclusion of students with disabilities in counseling activities along with other events changed this occurrence.

School counselors have been providing services to an increasing number of special education students especially since the passage of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (P. L. 94-142). The present study was conducted in an effort to determine the necessity for and types of school counselor professional preparation programs for working with these special needs children they will be serving. In addition, the following related issues were explored: (a) the roles and responsibilities of school counselors in relation to special needs students, (b) certification requirements of professional organizations

and state legislatures for school counselors to work with disabled students, (c) accreditation standards for school counselor education programs in relationship to working with exceptional students, (d) the effect legal and professional standards have on school counselor preparation towards serving the disabled population, and (e) the recommendations of theorists and/or researchers for school counselor training in working with the disabled students.

The results of research students indicate that the majority of school counselors feel ill-prepared to work effectively with students with disabilities. School counselors need to be knowledgeable about the intent of P. L. 94-142, federal and state diagnostic and placement criteria, individualized educational programs (IEPs), and mainstreaming concepts. Furthermore, knowledge of the effect various handicapping conditions have on the physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development on a student, appropriate intervention techniques when working with exceptional students, and appropriate guidance materials and activities for students with disabilities is needed.

Many of the roles and responsibilities school counselors have when working with students with disabilities are the same as those when working with "normal" students. The responsibilities of counseling, consulting, and coordinating are expanded. When counseling special needs students in the area of postsecondary educational

opportunities, school counselors' responsibilities may extend to include teaching disabled students to become self advocates, completing financial aid forms, and providing information on institutions of higher learning with adequate support services. In the area of vocational/career guidance, school counselors assist exceptional students by matching occupational requirements to students' abilities and writing resumes. In addition to counseling exceptional students, school counselors provide counseling for the parents and siblings of these children, act as a liaison between the school, the parents, and community agencies, and consult with teachers regarding mainstreaming and appropriate classroom guidance techniques.

Professional organizations such as the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools and the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Inc. leave the certification requirements of school counselors to each state. Other organizations such as the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools and the Southern Association of College and Schools recommend coursework in the area of school counseling at the master's degree level; however, there is no mention of specific courses in general or coursework aimed towards working with exceptional students.

Certification requirements mandated by state legislators have changed in several states during the past

ten years. There are four states instead of two which require school counseling majors to take a course in exceptionality. Twenty states now require a course in exceptionality for teacher certification which is a prerequisite for school counselor certification. This is up from five states. All other states do not have any specific stipulations for school counselor certification towards working with special needs students.

The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Education Programs (CACREP) established criteria for counselor education programs to use as guidelines to insure school counselors-in-training attain a high level of academic competence and a mastery of counseling skills. NCATE's criteria is more generalized than CACREP's; however, neither accrediting organization emphasizes any additional coursework in the area of exceptionality.

The standards set by professional organizations influence counselor education programs and to some extent, they also influence certification requirements mandated by states. Counselor education programs are also guided by the certification requirements specified by each state.

Researchers and theorists have made recommendations for the enhancement of counselor education programs in preparing school counselors to work with students with disabilities.

Suggestions included incorporating learning experiences and activities regarding exceptional students into existing coursework, requiring an additional course which gives a basic overview of handicapping conditions and appropriate remediation techniques, inviting guest lecturers from community agencies or advocacy groups, and/or a seminar course for students from the related disciplines of school counseling, rehabilitation counseling, special education, and vocational education. Other proposals are requiring a course in exceptionality as a prerequisite to acceptance in the counselor education program and adapting required practicum and field experiences to include working with students with disabilities.

Conclusions

The following conclusions are based on the research questions presented in Chapter One of this study and a review of the literature.

1. School counselors provide services for students with disabilities.

2. Counselor education programs do not effectively address issues of exceptionality as they pertain to school counselors.

3. The roles and responsibilities school counselors have when working with exceptional students are the same as those when working with "normal" students with adaptions to fulfill the requirements of federal and state laws.

4. Professional organizations do not have any specific requirements or standards with regards to school counselor preparation towards working with special needs students.

5. Four states require a course in exceptionality for school counselor certification while 20 states require a course in exceptionality for teacher certification as a prerequisite to school counselor certification.

6. Courses offered by counselor education programs are based on accreditation standards set by NCATE and CACREP and by the school counselor certification requirements mandated by each state.

7. Researchers and theorists recommend counselor education programs integrate issues of exceptionality into existing courses, add an additional course in exceptionality, adapt the required practicum and field experiences to include special needs students, and/or invite community agency workers and advocates of the disabled to be guest lecturers or speakers.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on the significant findings in the literature pertaining to school counselors for working with students with disabilities.

1. Counselor education programs must update their curriculum for school counselors to address the issues of exceptionality.

2. Accreditation organizations such as NCATE and

CACREP and professional organizations such as the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) must specify in their criteria learning experiences in the area of exceptionality.

3. State governing bodies must update their school counselor certification requirements to include coursework pertaining to students with disabilities.

4. Professional organizations, state certification boards, and local school districts must clearly define the roles and responsibilities of school counselors.

5. Current research studies on school counselors' preparation in working with special needs students and the effect it has on school counselors in-the-field must be conducted.

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